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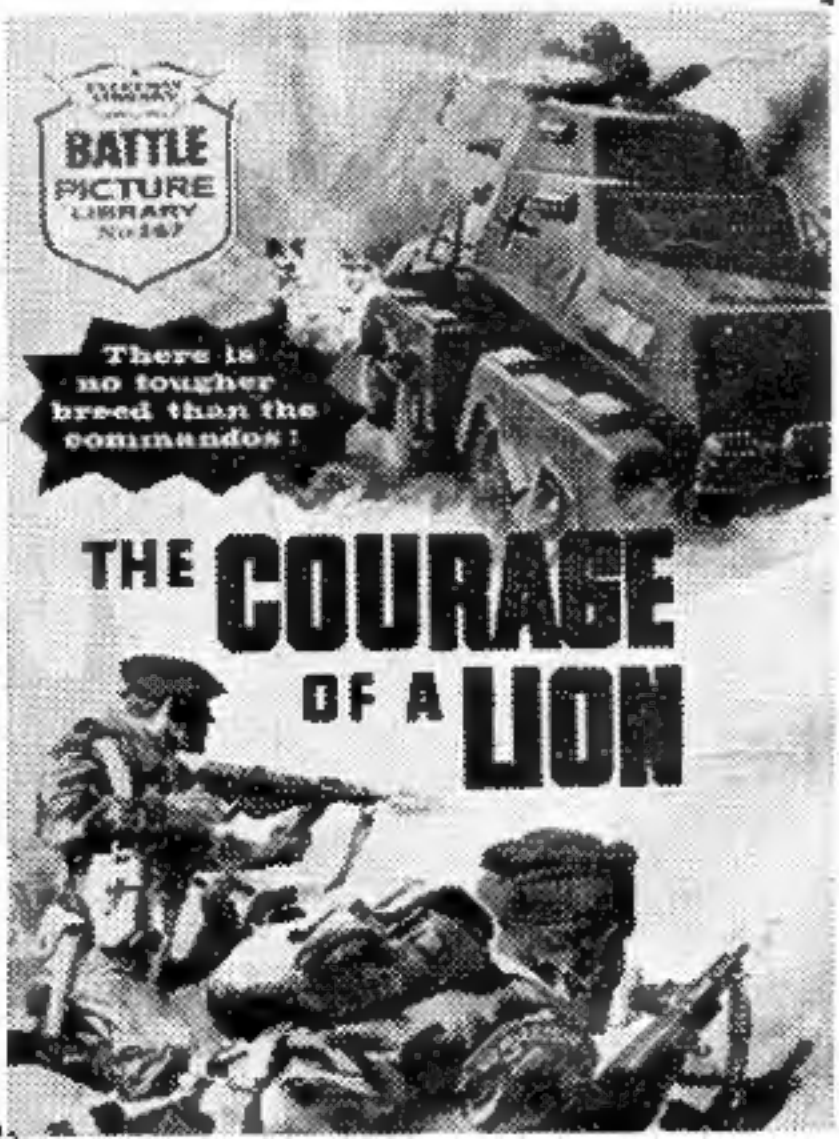

TO STRIKE AGAIN

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Chapter 1. Tyrant Sergeant

HE JUDGED HIS MOMENT TO PERFECTION FOR HE WAS A PROFESSIONAL — AND WAR WAS HIS TRADE.
WAIT-FOR-IT... FIRE!

UNDER THAT SHATTERING FUSILLADE, THE LEADING RANKS OF AFRIKA KORPS WERE THINNED TERRIBLY, BUT THEY DID NOT STOP.
FORWARD! SCHNELL! SCHNELL! THERE ARE NOT MANY OF THE ENGLANDER SWINE!

BUT THOSE FEW BRITISH WERE WELL LED AND HAD AN INNER COURAGE THAT SUSTAINED THEM WHEN THE GOING WAS TOUGHEST.

WITH A GALLANT, ALMIGHTY EFFORT, THEY FLUNG BACK THE ATTACK...
CEASE FIRE! CEASE FIRE! CONSERVE YOUR AMMUNITION — THEY'LL BE BACK!

BUT SERGEANT ROYAL AND HIS MEN WERE DESTINED NOT TO RECEIVE THE NEXT GERMAN ASSAULT...
THAT WAS A FINE SHOW, SAR'NT ROYAL! BUT WE'RE PULLING OUT NOW! ANOTHER BATTALION IS TAKING OVER.
CAN'T SAY I'M SORRY, SIR. THE MEN AREN'T AS TIGHTLY DISCIPLINED AS I'D LIKE. STILL, I EXPECT I CAN SHAKE 'EM DOWN INTO SOMETHING LIKE SOLDIERS — IN TIME!

THE LIEUTENANT HID HIS SMILE. EVERYONE IN THE REGIMENT KNEW THAT SERGEANT ROYAL WAS NEVER HAPPY UNLESS HE HAD HIS MEN ON THE JUMP. THE RELIEVING FORCE TOOK OVER THE FOXHOLES AND SLIT TRENCHES...
IT'S ALL YOURS, SIR—AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE, THOUGH JERRY SEEMS TO THINK IT BELONGS TO HIM.
OFF YOU GO! WE'LL ARGUE WITH JERRY ABOUT THAT FROM NOW ON.
3

To Strike Again

To Strike Again

AS THE MEN CAME TO A HALT, SERGEANT ROYAL RIVETED THEM WITH A PIERCING GLARE.

D'YOU CALL THAT A HALT? WE'LL TRY IT AGAIN — UNTIL YOU HALT AS ONE MAN! SQUAD, LEFT — *TURN!*

HE KEPT THE DRAFT MARCHING AND COUNTER-MARCHING IN THE BLAZING DESERT SUN.

PICK 'EM UP THERE! YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW! SQUAD — SQUAD, *HALT!*

AS ONE, THE BOOTS THUMPED DOWN...

SOUNDED LIKE A ROLL OF DRUMS! I WANT TO HEAR A SINGLE CRACK! WE CAN MARCH AROUND HERE ALL DAY UNTIL I DO!

THE SWEAT STREAMED DOWN THEIR FACES, THE DUST STUNG THEIR EYES AND DRIED THEIR MOUTHS — BUT THEY MARCHED ON!
HE'S NOTHING BUT A SADISTIC SWINE! THOSE THREE STRIPES ON HIS ARM DON'T GIVE HIM THE LICENCE TO TORTURE US!
SHUT UP, FORD, FOR PETE'S SAKE! HE CAN DO WHAT HE LIKES — HE'S A SERGEANT!

ROYAL CAUGHT THE MUTTERED WORDS FROM THE RANKS...
SO! SOMEONE WANTS TO HAVE A PLEASANT LITTLE CHAT, EH? SQUAD— SQUAD, HALT!

UNEASILY, THE DRAFT STARED TO THE FRONT, EACH MAN UNCOMFORTABLY AWARE OF THE FORBIDDING PRESENCE OF SERGEANT ROYAL.
WHEN YOU MARCH UNDER MY COMMAND YOU MARCH AT ATTENTION! IS THAT UNDERSTOOD? THERE WILL BE NO TALKING IN THE RANKS...

NO TALKING EXCEPT WHEN I SAY SO! YOU! WHAT'S YOUR NAME, YOU HORRIBLE LITTLE MAN!

SERGEANT ROYAL DID NOT KNOW FOR SURE WHO HAD BEEN TALKING, BUT SOME INSTINCT MADE HIM PICK ON ROBIN FORD.
FORD, SAR'NT.
FORD! WELL, FORD, YOU AND I ARE GOING TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER—AND THE FIRST THING IS, WHERE'S YOUR VIOLIN?

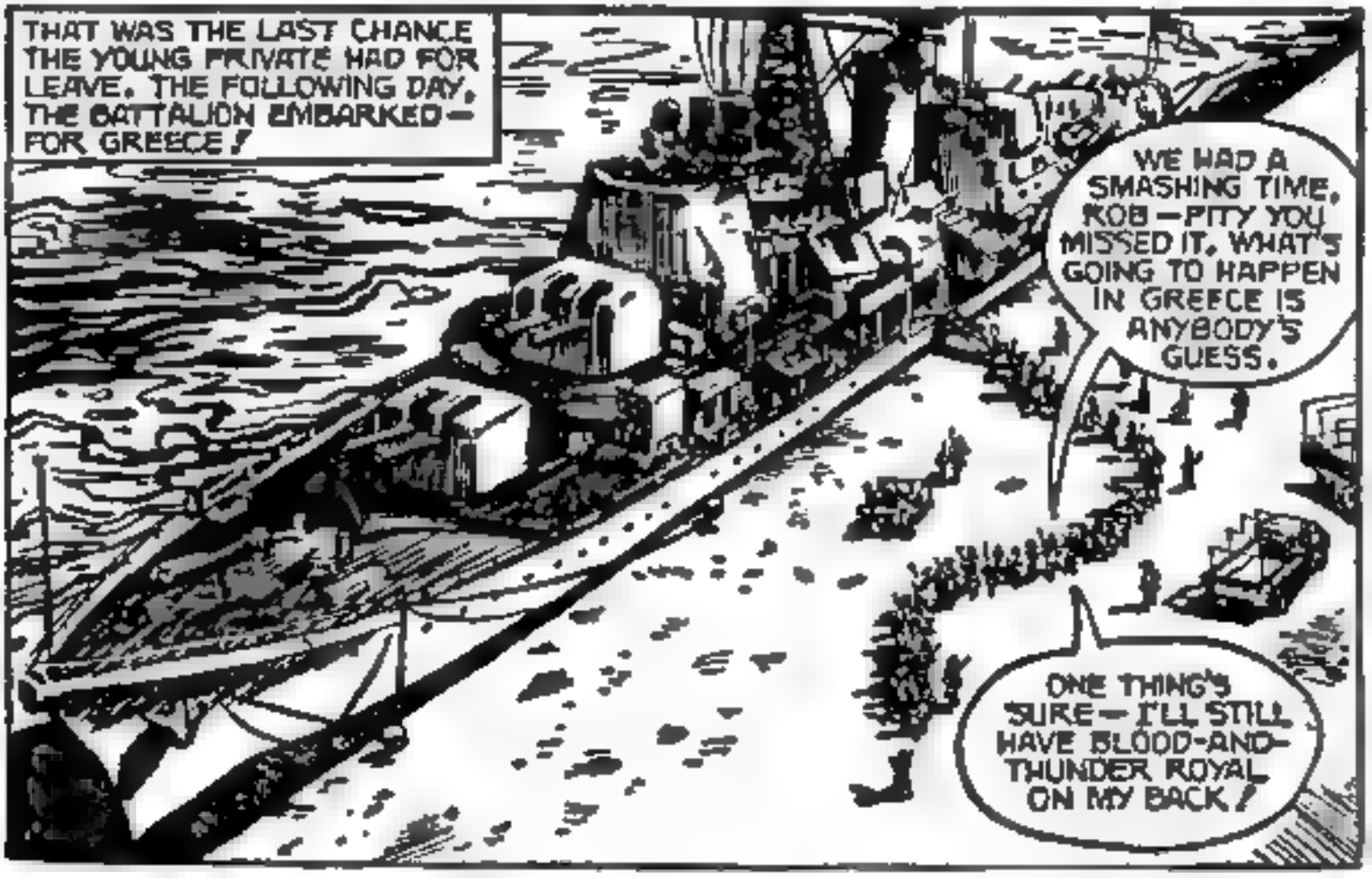
ROBIN FORD'S ICILY DISTANT AIR GOT UNDER SERGEANT ROYAL'S SKIN...
VIOLIN, SAR'NT? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
YOU ARE A VIOLINIST, AREN'T YOU? YOUR HAIR'S LONG ENOUGH. GET IT CUT, MAN!

THAT WAS THE BEGINNING. FROM THEN ON, ROBIN FORD COULD DO NO RIGHT IN THE EYES OF SERGEANT ROYAL.
CHEER UP, FORD! ONLY ANOTHER SEVEN DAYS TO GO AND THEN YOU'LL BE OUT OF THE COOKHOUSE!
AND THEN OLD SQUAREBASHER WILL FIND ANOTHER EXCUSE TO PUT ME ON A CHARGE AND I'LL WIND UP RIGHT BACK HERE!

SO IT WENT ON, THE DISCIPLINED FANATICISM OF ROYAL REMORSELESSLY PITTED AGAINST THE UNSOLDIERLY INDIFFERENCE OF FORD.
FILTHY! THIS RIFLE IS A DISGRACE TO THE REGIMENT! I'VE WARNED YOU, FORD, MANY TIMES. BUT I'LL MAKE A SOLDIER OUT OF YOU YET... YOU'RE ON A CHARGE!

EVEN HIS BROTHER N.C.O.s COMMENTED UPON HIS ATTITUDE TO PRIVATE FORD...
ROYAL, YOU'RE BEING PRETTY TOUGH ON YOUNG FORD? ISN'T IT TIME YOU EASED OFF?
I KNOW HIS KIND, SIR— THEY THINK THEY'RE TOO GOOD FOR THE ARMY. HE'S GOT TO LEARN WHO'S THE MASTER AROUND HERE!

EVEN FORD'S FEW BRIEF PERIODS OF REST AND RELAXATION WERE DENIED HIM BY THE IMPLACABLE SERGEANT.
COME ON, ROB! WE'VE ONLY A TWELVE HOUR PASS SO WE CAN'T AFFORD TO WASTE A MINUTE OF IT!
HOLD IT, FORD! I'VE A FEW JOBS FOR YOU—JOBS THAT WILL TAKE ALL DAY. GET CHANGED INTO YOUR FATIGUES!


THAT WAS THE LAST CHANCE THE YOUNG PRIVATE HAD FOR LEAVE. THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE BATTALION EMBARKED— FOR GREECE!
WE HAD A SMASHING TIME, ROB—PITY YOU MISSED IT. WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN GREECE IS ANYBODY'S GUESS.
ONE THING'S SURE—I'LL STILL HAVE BLOOD-AND-THUNDER ROYAL ON MY BACK!

IN GREECE, THE BATTALION WERE TRANSPORTED RAPIDLY NORTHWARDS. THERE TO AWAIT THE GERMAN ONSLAUGHT...
'WE'LL MAKE A STAND, OF COURSE— BUT I DOUBT IF WE'LL STOP THE JERRIES HERE.
IF WE'RE GIVEN EVEN ODDS WE'LL BE ALL RIGHT, SIR. BUT THAT'S MORE THAN WE CAN HOPE FOR, I GUESS.

THE OMINOUS PROSPECT BEFORE THEM HAD NOT CHANGED SERGEANT ROYAL'S DOMINEERING ATTITUDE.
MOVE THAT ROCK, YOU IDLE LAYABOUT! THIS IS GOING TO BE THE BEST DEFENSIVE POSITION IN THE WHOLE OF GREECE!

PRIVATE ROBIN FORD STARED UP SULLENLY AT THE SERGEANT...

HE NEVER LETS ME ALONE! HE PICKS ON EVERYONE FROM TIME TO TIME. BUT ME—HE DRIVES ME LIKE A PACKHORSE!

TAKE IT EASY, ROB! IF HE SEES YOUR FACE HE'LL PUT YOU ON A CHARGE FOR HARBOURING MURDER!

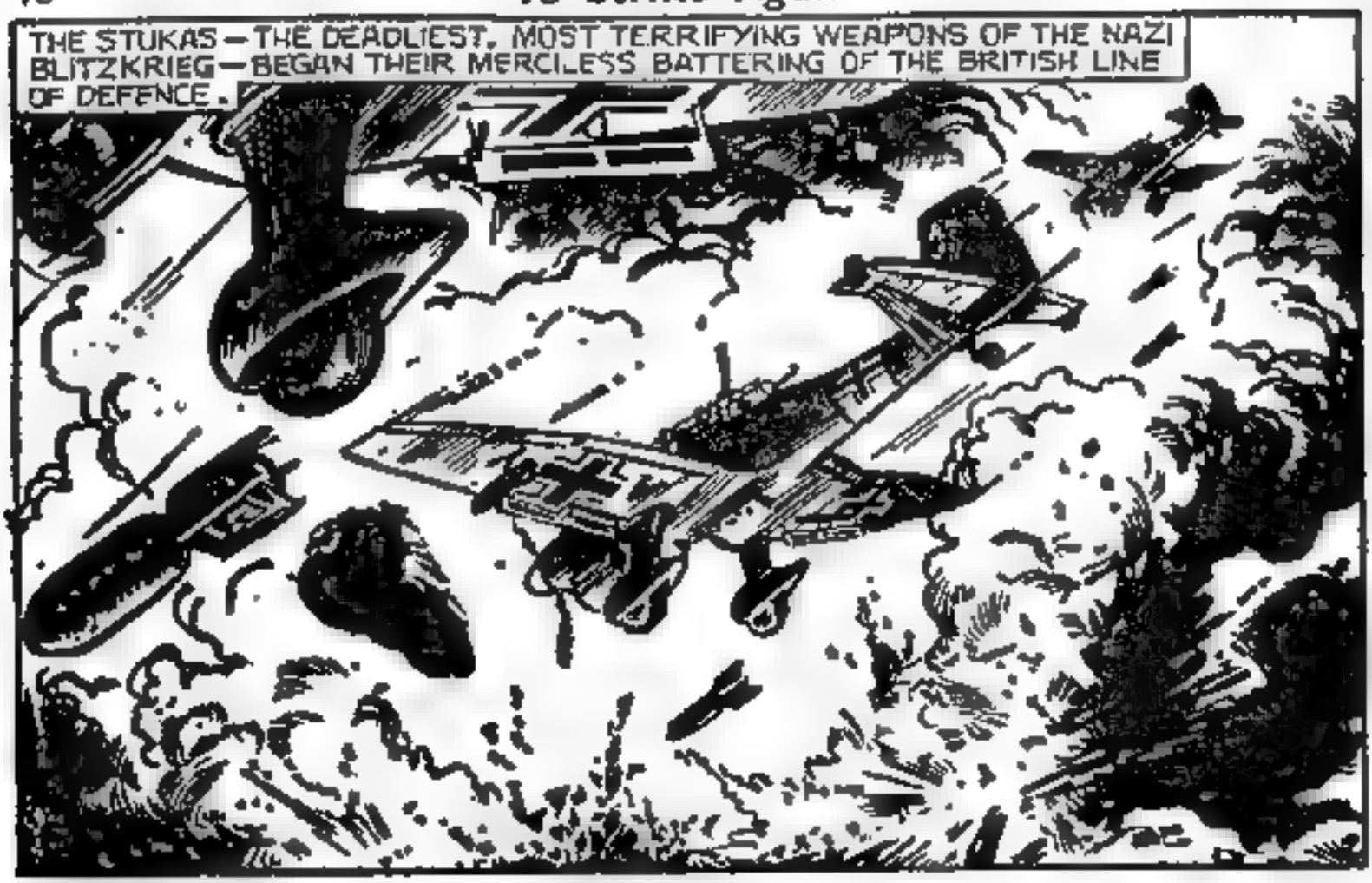
AND WOULDN'T I JUST LIKE TO, NOBBY! THAT MAN'S JUST PLAIN VICIOUS!

STOP THE NATTERING! THE JERRIES WON'T WAIT FOR YOU TO FINISH YOUR GOSSIP!

ALL TOO SOON SERGEANT ROYAL'S WORDS WERE PROVED TRAGICALLY CORRECT...

ACHTUNG! THE BRITISH POSITION IS BELOW. PREPARE FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION!

JAWOHL, HERR HAUPTMANN! OUR BOMBS WILL BLOW THEIR PUNY TRENCHES TO DUST—*AND BURY THE BRITISH IN THEM!*


THE STUKAS — THE DEADLIEST, MOST TERRIFYING WEAPONS OF THE NAZI BLITZKRIEG — BEGAN THEIR MERCILESS BATTERING OF THE BRITISH LINE OF DEFENCE.

THEIR ACCURACY WAS UNCANNY, THEIR DESTRUCTIVE AND DEMORALISING POWER OVERWHELMING.

AT LAST IT WAS OVER. AS THE STUKAS WINGED VICTORIOUSLY AWAY THE BRITISH SURVIVORS CRAWLED OUT OF THE SMOKE AND CARNAGE...
THERE THEY ARE! PANZERS! COME ON, YOU DOZY LOT! FORD! DON'T HANG ABOUT THERE... WE'VE GOT ACTION AHEAD!
WE WERE HALF BURIED, SAR'NT...
IT'S NO USE EXPLAINING TO HIM, NOBBY — HE ISN'T HUMAN!

IT WAS THE REALLY INHUMAN MONSTERS THAT WERE THUNDERING TOWARDS THE BRITISH LINE...
THE JERRIES MEAN BUSINESS THIS TIME! WELL, WE'LL HAVE A GO AT STOPPING THEM WITH WHAT THE STUKAS LEFT...

THE LIEUTENANT KNEW THE CHANCES OF HIS MEN WERE SLIM... BUT HE ALSO KNEW THAT THEY WOULD FIGHT UNTIL ORDERED TO RETREAT...
WE'LL HOLD OFF THEIR FIRST ATTACK—AFTER THAT, THE GOING WILL GET ROUGH. KEEP THE MEN STEADY, SAR'NT!
SIR! THE MEN WILL BE ALL RIGHT...
BRITISH TWENTY-FIVE POUNDERS OPENED UP, FIRING LOW OVER THE LINES, PLUNGING THEIR DEADLY SHELLS INTO THE ADVANCING NAZI COLUMN...
THE ACCURSED BRITISH ARTILLERY! THEY ARE ON TARGET ALREADY.
JA! YOU SOON LEARN JUST HOW GOOD THE BRITISH ARTILLERY IS. SEND IN THE INFANTRY TO SMOKE THEM OUT!

ONCE MORE, SERGEANT ROYAL'S MEN FACED TOUGH NAZI INFANTRY. THIS TIME, NOT THE AFRIKA KORPS, BUT THE CONQUERORS OF HALF EUROPE!
DESPITE THE SMOKE AND CONFUSION, THE WICKED SNAP OF BULLETS AND THE LONG HAMMERING ROLL OF AUTOMATIC FIRE, SERGEANT ROYAL STILL BADGERED HIS MEN.
HIT 'EM HARD AND PUT EVERY SHOT SMACK IN THE BULL! THE ARTILLERY HAVE HELD UP THE PANZERS —IT'S ONLY JERRY INFANTRY IN FRONT OF YOU NOW!

ROBIN FORD'S MOUTH WAS DRY, HIS HANDS CLAMMY, AS HE TIGHTENED HIS GRIP ON HIS RIFLE.
THIS IS WHERE SERGEANT ROYAL IS JUST LIKE ANY ONE OF US. HE CAN BE KILLED AS EASILY AS ME OR THE NEXT MAN!

BUT EVEN IN THAT VIOLENT MOMENT, SERGEANT ROYAL SHOWED HE WAS NOT AS OTHER MEN...
THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO TAKE AIM, FORD! I'VE TRAINED YOU BETTER THAN THAT! PUT THE BUTT INTO YOUR SHOULDER AND DON'T BE SCARED OF THE KICK!

BY SHEER FORCE OF DISCIPLINE, ROYAL MADE THEM HOLD THEIR FIRE UNTIL THE MOST EFFECTIVE MOMENT...
FIRE!

BUT SUCH A POWERFUL NAZI ONSLAUGHT COULD NOT BE HURLED BACK EASILY BY A MERE HANDFUL OF BRITISH...
THEY'RE COMING ON! WE'RE NOT STOPPING THEM...

SERGEANT ROYAL DROVE HIS MEN ON, LASHING THEM WITH A HARSH TONGUE, FORCING THEM TO FIGHT AND DIE RATHER THAN GIVE GROUND.
GRENADES! GRENADES! KNOCK THE STUFFING OUT OF 'EM!
THERE'S A FAIR CROWD OF 'EM, SAR'NT! THEY KEEP ON COMING!

NAZI STORM TROOPERS AND BRITISH INFANTRY CLASHED IN FIERCE AND MERCILESS HAND TO HAND COMBAT...

M'RACULOUSLY AND GLORIOUSLY, THAT SURGING NAZI ONSLAUGHT WAS HELD, BUT AT A BITTER PRICE...
WE'VE SEEN 'EM OFF! THEY'RE RUNNING!

BUT THE EXHAUSTED SURVIVORS OF THE BRITISH BATTALION WOULD NEVER WITHSTAND ANOTHER SUCH ATTACK. THE ORDERS TO WITHDRAW WERE GIVEN...
THE BATTALION JOINED THE LONG WITHDRAWAL DOWN THROUGH GREECE TOWARDS THE SEA...

Chapter 2. The Worm Turns

BUT THE NAZI FELDWEBEL WAS DEALING WITH A SOLDIER WILY IN THE ARTS OF WAR—A MAN WITH A SIXTH SENSE FOR DANGER.

NO SIGN OF MOVEMENT—BUT THERE'S SOMEONE IN THERE, ALL RIGHT! *MUST* BE JERRIES! THIS LITTLE BUSINESS MIGHT BE INTERESTING, AFTER ALL!

WITH GRIM CONFIDENCE, SERGEANT ROYAL GAVE HIS ORDERS...

THE FLANK ATTACK WILL SHOVE JERRY OFF BALANCE—THEN WE CAN GO IN AND FINISH HIM. YOU STAY WITH ME, FORD—I COULDN'T TRUST YOU ALONE, NOT WITH JERRY ABOUT...

THE RESENTMENT THAT HAD BUILT UP INSIDE ROBIN FORD DURING THE LONG WEEKS, BUBBLED DANGEROUSLY NEAR THE SURFACE NOW...

HE'S LIKE SOME TIN-POT GOD! DO THIS—DO THAT! HE NEVER LETS UP! HE'S GOING TO GO TOO FAR ONE DAY—AND THAT DAY MAY BE SOON!

KEEP YOUR FOOL HEAD DOWN, JACKSON! I DON'T CARE IF THE JERRIES BLOW IT OFF, BUT I DON'T WANT THEM TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE!

ROYAL LED THE TWO MEN WITH HIM ACROSS THE HILLSIDE UNTIL THEY REACHED THE LIP OF A GORGE THROUGH WHICH A RIVER RAGED FAR BELOW.
THIS IS AS FAR AS WE GO. WE'LL RUN STRAIGHT ALONG THE EDGE OF THIS GORGE AT THE COTTAGE AS S[illegible] AS THE FLANK ATTACKS START! GOT IT?

AT THAT MOMENT, PRIVATE JACKSON MADE HIS LAST STUPID MISTAKE...
AAAGH!
THE DIM-WITTED NINCOMPOOP! I WARNED HIM! NOW THE JERRIES KNOW EXACTLY WHERE WE ARE — TOO EARLY!

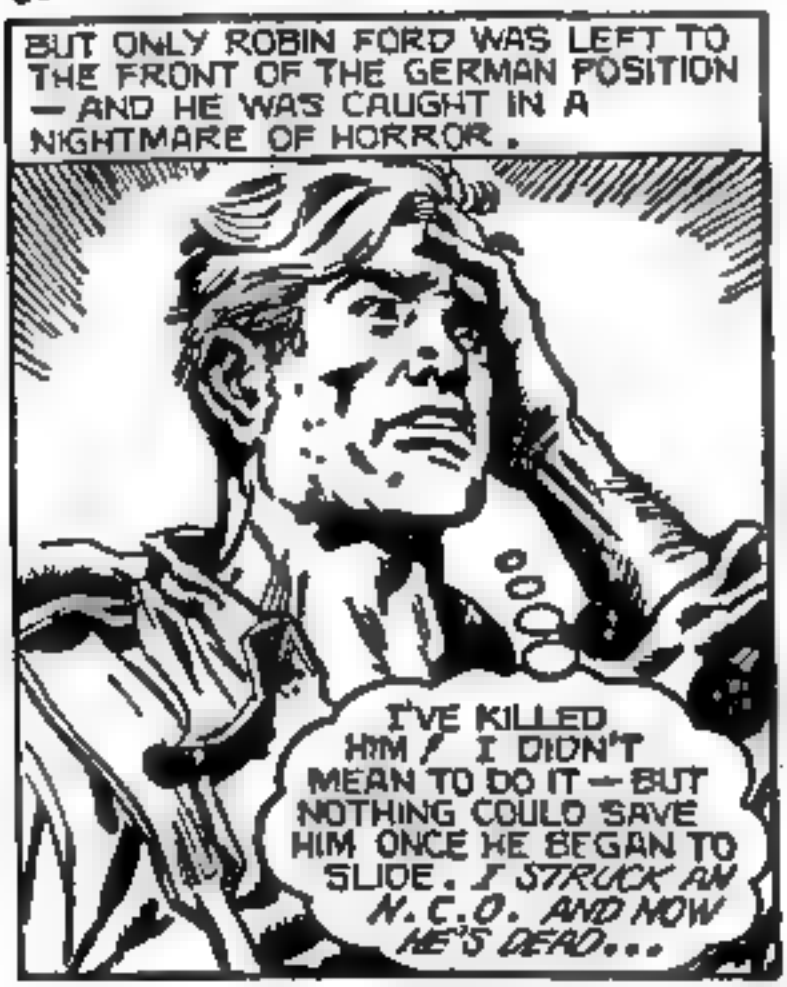
ROYAL'S CALLOUS INDIFFERENCE TO A MAN'S DEATH MADE PRIVATE ROBIN FORD SEE RED.
YOU BUTCHER! POOR JACKSON'S DEAD BUT YOU DON'T CARE A FIG! YOU DRIVE MEN UNTIL THEY CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT. WELL, I'M FINISHED!
WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT, FORD?
I'M FINISHED, SERGEANT ROYAL— I'M CLEARING OUT, RIGHT NOW!
DON'T TALK LIKE A FOOL, FORD! YOU'RE STAYING HERE AND FINISHING THE JOB WE'VE STARTED...
IN THE STRESS OF THAT MOMENT, SERGEANT ROYAL FOR ONCE FAILED TO ESTIMATE CORRECTLY THE TEMPER OF ONE OF HIS MEN...
YOU DO YOUR OWN DIRTY WORK FROM NOW ON! YOU'VE HOUNDED AND DRIVEN ME FOR THE LAST TIME—I'M NOT TAKING ANY MORE!
SO HELP ME, I'LL PUT YOU ON THE BIGGEST FIZZER YOU'VE EVER BEEN ON IN YOUR LIFE! EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE A SORRY APOLOGY FOR A SOLDIER, I NEVER DREAMED YOU WERE A COWARD!

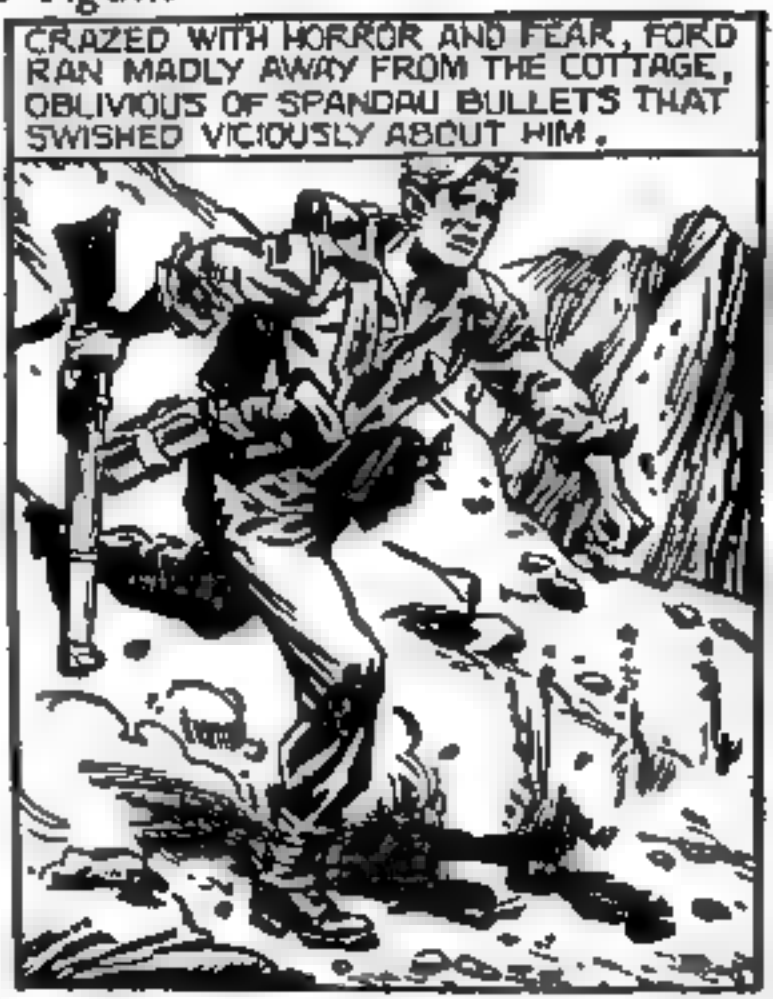
BLIND WITH ANGER, ROBIN FORD LASHED OUT AT HIS TORMENTOR . . .

SERGEANT ROYAL TOTTERED BACKWARDS — TOWARDS THE LIP OF THE GORGE!
HELP ME, FORD! I'M SLIDING OVER THE EDGE — HELP ME, MAN!

AND WITH AN INARTICULATE YELL, SERGEANT ROYAL VANISHED INTO THE GORGE!
AAAGH!

AT THAT MOMENT, THE FLANK ATTACK WENT IN...
THIS IS THE FLANK ATTACK WE EXPECTED... BUT THE BRITISH WON'T FOOL US! WATCH YOUR FRONT WITH THAT SPANDAU, HANS...
JAWOHL, FELDWEBEL!


BUT ONLY ROBIN FORD WAS LEFT TO THE FRONT OF THE GERMAN POSITION — AND HE WAS CAUGHT IN A NIGHTMARE OF HORROR.
I'VE KILLED HIM! I DIDN'T MEAN TO DO IT — BUT NOTHING COULD SAVE HIM ONCE HE BEGAN TO SLIDE. I STRUCK AN N.C.O. AND NOW HE'S DEAD...


CRAZED WITH HORROR AND FEAR, FORD RAN MADLY AWAY FROM THE COTTAGE, OBLIVIOUS OF SPANDAU BULLETS THAT SWISHED VICIOUSLY ABOUT HIM.

HOW FAR HE RAN, PANTING AND STUMBLING OVER THE ROCKS, ROBIN FORD NEVER KNEW. BUT, AT LAST, HE COULD RUN NO MORE...
I'VE HAD IT — GOT TO REST. THE JERRIES ARE BOUND TO BE ABOUT SOMEWHERE...

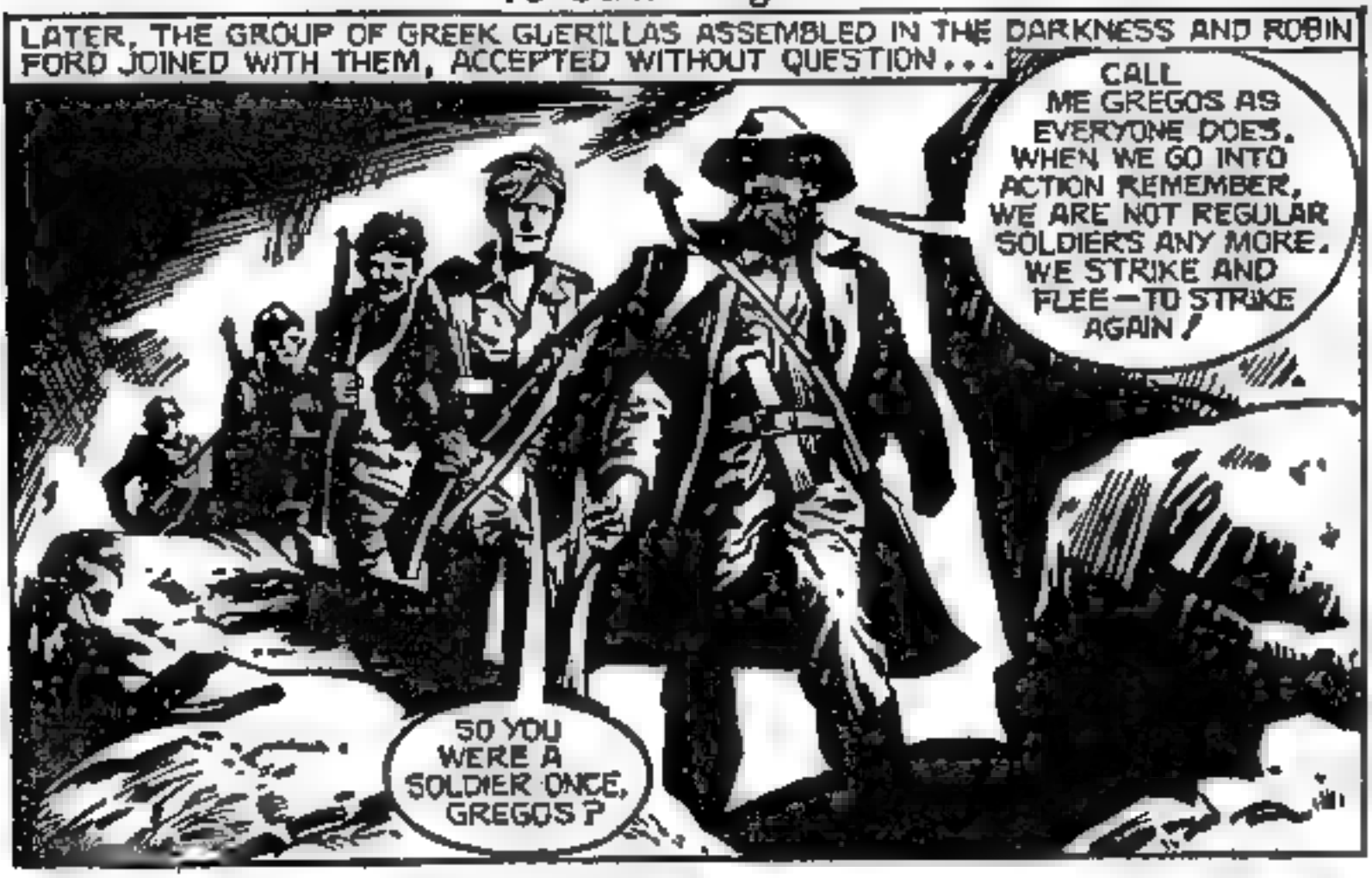
HE STAGGERED ON — INTO THE EVENING TWILIGHT AND JUST WHEN FORD FELT HE COULD NOT MOVE ANOTHER STEP, HE SAW A SMALL BUILDING AHEAD OF HIM.
A FARMHOUSE! MAYBE I COULD GET SOME FOOD AND A REST THERE.

RISKING EVERYTHING, FORD KNOCKED AT THE FARMHOUSE DOOR.
I'M BRITISH — I NEED SHELTER...
COME IN — WE SPEAK ENGLISH HERE — AND WE HAVE NO LOVE FOR THE GERMANS!

FORD WAS GIVEN A WELCOME, FOOD AND DRINK, TRADITIONAL GREEK HOSPITALITY...
I AM GIORGIOS AND THIS IS MY BROTHER, SAMOS. THIS IS A BAD DAY FOR GREECE. THE GERMANS ARE INVADING US AND NOTHING CAN STOP THEM...
IT'S A BAD DAY FOR THE BRITISH ARMY, TOO. WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THE LUFTWAFFE AND THE PANZERS. ONE DAY...

FORD'S APOLOGETIC WORDS WERE DROWNED BY A DEEP RUMBLING VOICE, A VOICE THAT CARRIED THE RASP OF AUTHORITY...
STAY, ENGLISHMAN! WE GREEKS DO NOT WISH TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN ONE DAY. WE ARE CONCERNED WITH TODAY! TODAY, THE HATED GERMANS TEAR THE HEART OUT OF OUR COUNTRY—BUT WE SHALL FIGHT THEM!

THE POWER AND IMPACT OF THIS GREEK'S PERSONALITY LEFT AN INDELIBLE IMPRINT ON ROBIN FORD'S MIND.
I'VE FOUGHT THE GERMANS UP IN THE MOUNTAINS... EVEN THOUGH THEY SWARM DOWN LIKE LOCUSTS. BUT I, TOO, WILL FIGHT THEM STILL!
THAT IS GOOD— I THOUGHT YOU WERE NO MISERABLE DESERTER. NOW, EAT UP, FOR WE HAVE WORK TO DO THIS NIGHT!


LATER, THE GROUP OF GREEK GUERILLAS ASSEMBLED IN THE DARKNESS AND ROBIN FORD JOINED WITH THEM, ACCEPTED WITHOUT QUESTION...
CALL ME GREGOS AS EVERYONE DOES. WHEN WE GO INTO ACTION REMEMBER, WE ARE NOT REGULAR SOLDIERS ANY MORE. WE STRIKE AND FLEE—TO STRIKE AGAIN!
SO YOU WERE A SOLDIER ONCE, GREGOS?

GREGOS' BEARDED FACE SPLIT INTO A GRIM SMILE.
AYE, I WAS A SOLDIER, ONCE. BUT THEY SAID I WAS TOO OLD FOR THIS WAR. HOW WRONG THEY WERE!

THE GUERILLAS MOVED FAST AND SURELY THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS THEY KNEW SO WELL UNTIL THEY WERE IN POSITION ABOVE A GERMAN CONVOY...
THERE IS YOUR TARGET! STRIKE, MY WOLVES, AND STRIKE HARD! MAKE THE HATED INVADER REPENT THIS DAY—ATTACK!

WITH ONLY THE HARSH STAMMER OF CAPTURED SCHMEISSERS TO HERALD THEIR ASSAULT, THE GREEKS SWEPT DOWN ON THE ENEMY TRANSPORT COLUMN.
AAAGH!

THE NIGHT ECHOED TO THE CRASH OF GUNFIRE AND THE YELLS OF BATTLING MEN—AND ROBIN FORD WAS IN THE THICK OF IT.
THAT'S YOUR LOT, NAZI...AND THAT'S MY LAST ROUND!
BULLETS LASHED THE GROUND AROUND THE ENGLISHMAN AS HE DIVED FOR THE GERMAN'S SCHMEISSER...
YOU'LL NOT NEED TH S ANY LONGER!

THEN, WITH ONE SINGLE DEADLY BURST, HE DISPOSED OF THE NAZI SHOOTING AT HIM...
THAT'S FOR STARTING THIS ROTTEN WAR!

THEN A SMOKE-BLACKENED AND TRIUMPHANT GREGOS ORDERED HIS MEN TO COVER...
ENOUGH! THE CONVOY IS GUTTED! RUN, MY WOLVES — RUN FOR THE HILLS! WITHDRAW SO THAT WE MAY STRIKE AGAIN!

WITH MANY A ROUGH JEST, THE HAPPY GUERILLAS MOVED AWAY INTO THE HILLS AGAIN.
YOU DID WELL TONIGHT, MY SON. I WELCOME YOU TO MY BAND. TOGETHER, WE SHALL NEVER LET THE NAZIS ENJOY THE FRUITS OF THEIR VICTORY OVER GREECE.
I'M HAPPY TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE YOU, GREGOS.
YOU'RE A NATURAL LEADER, I GUESS. HOW DIFFERENT TO THAT SWINE, ROYAL!

BUT DESPITE THE GREEK GUERILLAS' HEROIC HARRYING OF THE GERMANS, THE NAZI BLITZKRIEG SWEPT DOWN THE GREEK MAINLAND, HAMMERING THE BRITISH IMPERIAL FORCES TOWARDS THE SEA...
ONLY GALLANT LAST-DITCH STANDS ENABLED THE BRITISH TO BRING OFF THE BULK OF THE ARMY.

THE NEWS OF THE BRITISH WITHDRAWAL AT LAST REACHED GREGOS AND HIS FEROCIOUS BAND OF GUERILLAS . . .
THE BRITISH HAVE BEEN KICKED INTO THE SEA . ALWAYS THE GERMANS WIN — ALWAYS IT IS THE SAME . . .
THEY MAY BE WINNING NOW GIORGIOS, BUT REMEMBER — THE BRITISH ALWAYS WIN THE LAST BATTLE ! THAT'S THE ONE THAT COUNTS !

A GRIM SMILE OF AMUSED RESPECT TOUCHED GREGOS' TOUGH FACE . . .
WHAT ROBIN SAYS IS RIGHT ! THE BRITISH MAY BE DEFEATED NOW — BUT THEY WILL BE BACK ! UNTIL THAT DAY, WE MUST STRIKE THE NAZIS HARD AND OFTEN !

Chapter 3. *Truth of Command*

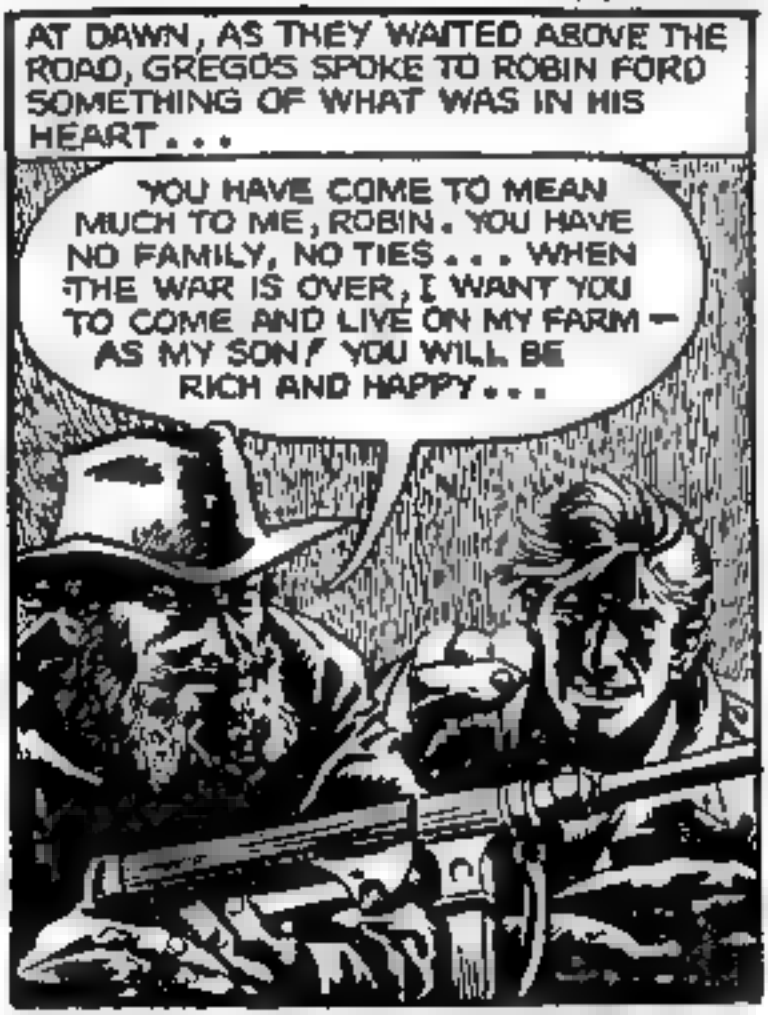
IN THE BITTER MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED, GREGOS AND HIS BRAVE FOLLOWERS DID JUST THAT.

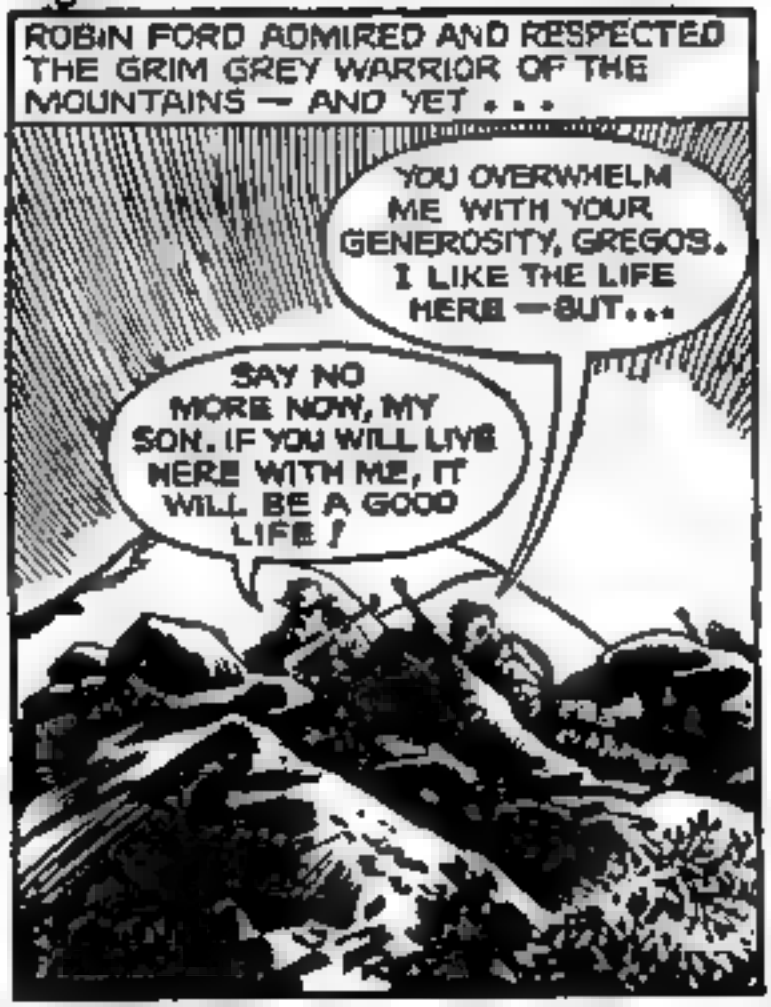
AS TIME WENT ON, THE BEARDED GREEK AND THE YOUNG ENGLISH SOLDIER GREW CLOSER TOGETHER, TRUE COMRADES IN BATTLE . . .

IN THE LOCAL GARRISON TOWN, MAJOR STOLZ, NAZI COMMANDER FOR THE DISTRICT, FROWNED ANGRILY OVER HIS MAPS . . .
THESE ACCURSED GREEK GUERILLAS COMMIT THEIR OUTRAGES WITH IMPUNITY! THEY MUST BE STOPPED!
THEY HAVE BEEN VERY CUNNING, HERR MAJOR...

THEN WE MUST MEET CUNNING WITH CUNNING! I SHALL BAIT A TRAP FOR THEM. WHEN THEY ARE ALL SAFELY GATHERED IN THEY WILL BE SHOT — EVERY LAST ONE!

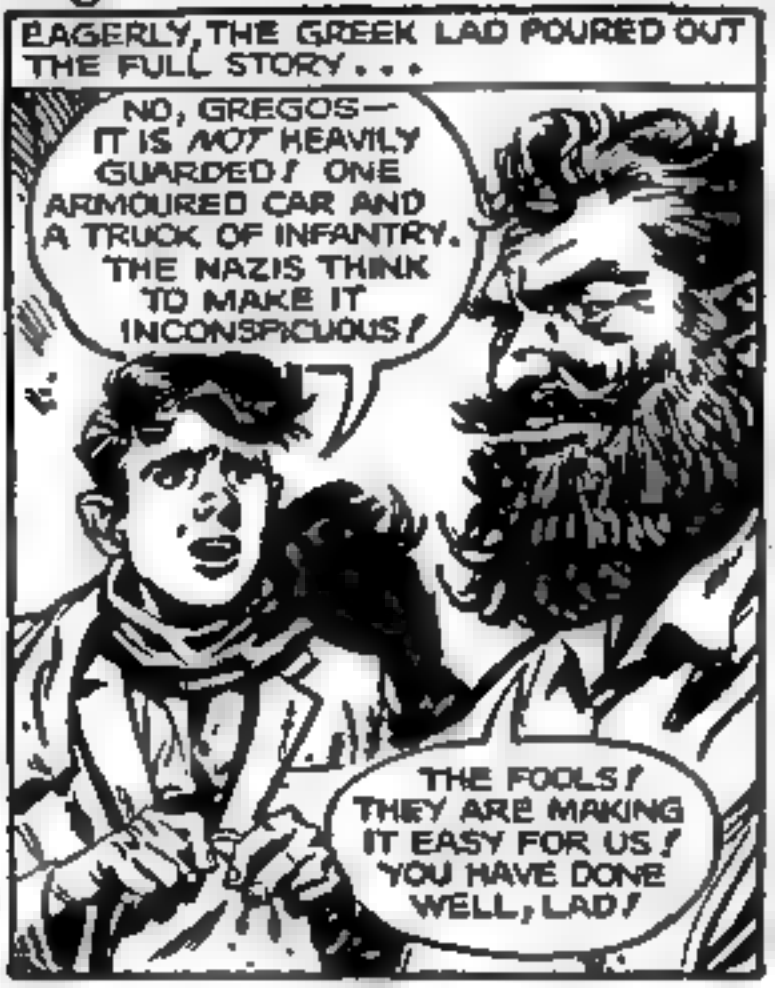
MAJOR STOLZ'S EVIL MIND SOON EVOLVED A PLAN THAT COULD NOT FAIL.
THERE IS MY BAIT — AN ORDINARY GERMAN ARMY LORRY. BUT IT IS A LORRY WITH A SECRET...


AT DAWN, AS THEY WAITED ABOVE THE ROAD, GREGOS SPOKE TO ROBIN FORD SOMETHING OF WHAT WAS IN HIS HEART . . .
YOU HAVE COME TO MEAN MUCH TO ME, ROBIN. YOU HAVE NO FAMILY, NO TIES . . . WHEN THE WAR IS OVER, I WANT YOU TO COME AND LIVE ON MY FARM — AS MY SON! YOU WILL BE RICH AND HAPPY . . .


ROBIN FORD ADMIRED AND RESPECTED THE GRIM GREY WARRIOR OF THE MOUNTAINS — AND YET . . .
YOU OVERWHELM ME WITH YOUR GENEROSITY, GREGOS. I LIKE THE LIFE HERE — BUT . . .
SAY NO MORE NOW, MY SON. IF YOU WILL LIVE HERE WITH ME, IT WILL BE A GOOD LIFE!

AT THAT MOMENT, THE LOOKOUT WHISTLED SOFTLY AND AT ONCE THE TWO MEN WERE BACK IN THE HARSH WORLD OF THE PRESENT . . .
THEY COME! AND WE ARE READY!

THE SECRET OF THAT GERMAN LORRY WAS TOLD TO GREGOS WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!
THE GERMANS ARE TAKING ALL THE LOOTED TREASURE FROM THE TOWN! A LORRY IS GOING NORTH EVEN NOW!
HEAVILY GUARDED, NO DOUBT?


EAGERLY, THE GREEK LAD POURED OUT THE FULL STORY...
NO, GREGOS— IT IS *NOT* HEAVILY GUARDED! ONE ARMOURED CAR AND A TRUCK OF INFANTRY. THE NAZIS THINK TO MAKE IT INCONSPICUOUS!
THE FOOLS! THEY ARE MAKING IT EASY FOR US! YOU HAVE DONE WELL, LAD!

EVEN AS THEY MOVED OUT OF THEIR HIDE-OUT TOWARDS THE ROAD ALONG WHICH THE CONVOY WOULD PASS, GREGOS FINALISED HIS PLANS.
WE WILL USE GRENADES ON THE INFANTRY TRUCK. THE ARMOURED CAR WILL BE SILENCED IN THE USUAL WAY...

AS THE SUN BEGAN TO RISE ABOVE THE MOUNTAIN PEAKS, THE CONVOY ROLLED STEADILY TOWARDS THE AMBUSH.
GRENADES READY! WHEN I SHOOT—THROW!
MOLOTOV COCKTAILS ALL READY FOR THE ARMOURED CAR, GREGOS. THOSE JERRIES WON'T KNOW WHAT'S HIT 'EM!

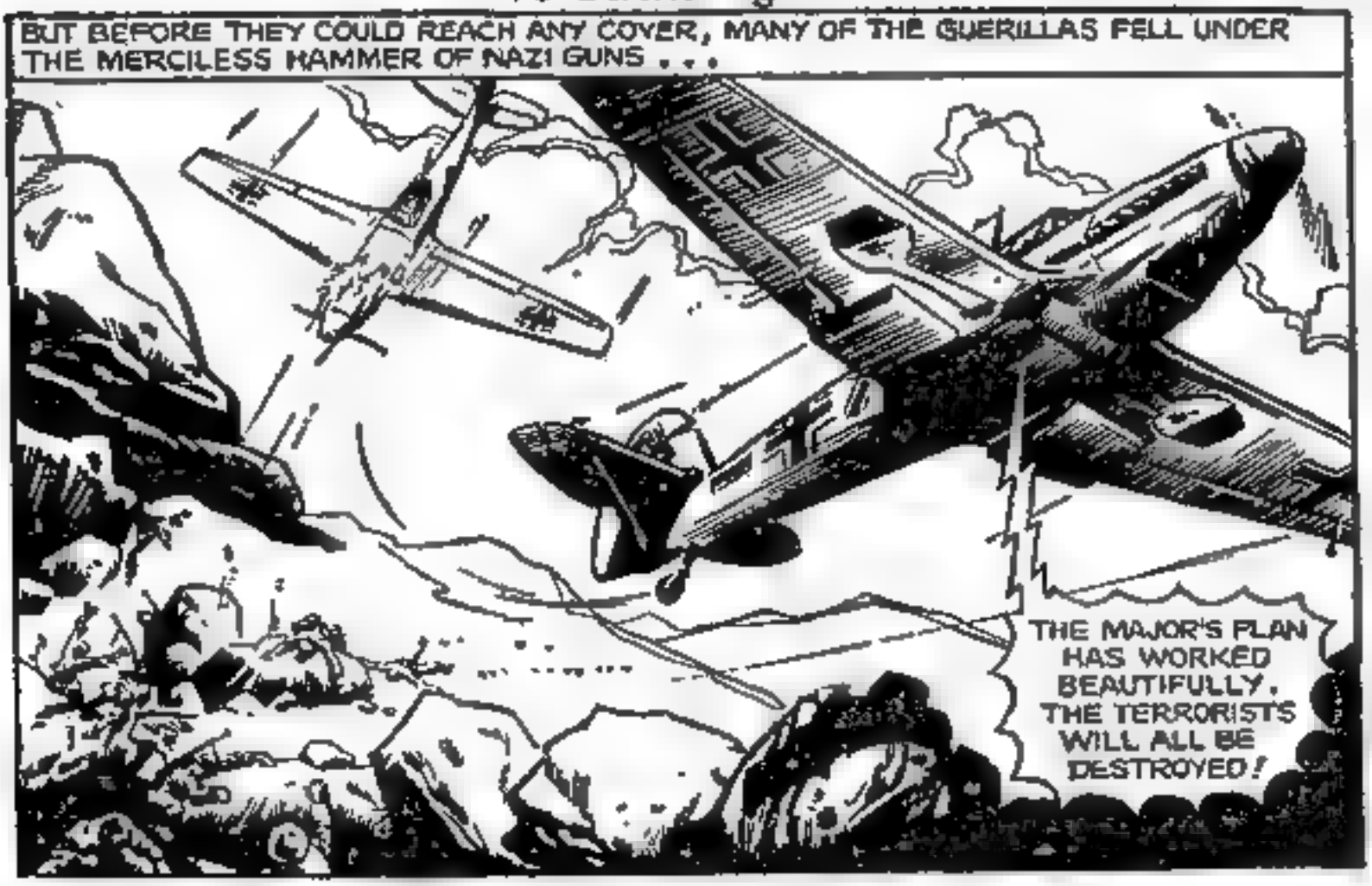
AT THE CRACKLING BLAST FROM GREGOS' SCHMEISSER, THE GUERILLAS ROSE AS ONE MAN . . .
ACHTUNG! TERRORISTS! OPEN FIRE!
GET THAT ARMOURED CAR QUICKLY, ROBIN, MY SON!

THE MOLOTOV COCKTAIL FLUNG BY FORD'S EXPERT HAND LANDED BENEATH THE ARMOURED CAR. FLAME CAUGHT THE PETROL — AND THEN . . .

RIDDLED AND SMASHED, THE NAZI CONVOY WAS WRECKED. WHOOPING SAVAGE TRIUMPH, THE GREEK GUERILLAS SWOOPED ON THE TREASURE LORRY . . .
NOW FOR OUR TREASURE — THE NAZIS HAVE SEEN THE LAST OF IT!
THAT WAS A SWEET OPERATION. IT WENT LIKE CLOCKWORK!

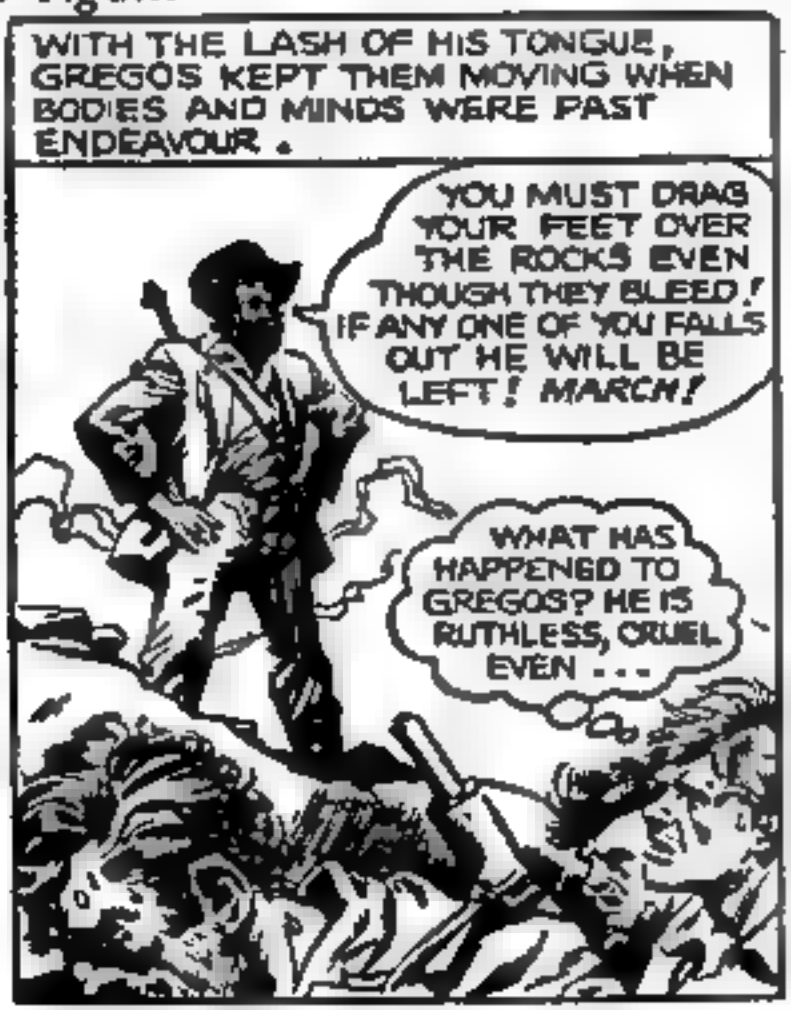
THEN, IT HAPPENED!
AAAGH!
A TRAP! A FILTHY BOOBY-TRAP!

ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY, A SWARM OF MESSERSCHMITT 109s SWOOPED OUT OF THE SKY, SCOURING THE ROAD WITH CANNON AND MACHINE GUN FIRE.
THE NAZIS HAVE TRAPPED US — BUT ALL IS NOT LOST YET. TAKE COVER AMONG THE ROCKS, MY MEN!


BUT BEFORE THEY COULD REACH ANY COVER, MANY OF THE GUERILLAS FELL UNDER THE MERCILESS HAMMER OF NAZI GUNS . . .
THE MAJOR'S PLAN HAS WORKED BEAUTIFULLY. THE TERRORISTS WILL ALL BE DESTROYED!

YET THE IRON COURAGE AND DETERMINATION OF GREGOS BROUGHT A HANDFUL OF HIS MEN OUT OF THAT MASSACRE.
THIS AREA WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR US AFTER THIS. WE MUST MARCH TO THE COAST. THERE WE CAN JOIN UP WITH OTHER BANDS AND BEGIN RAIDING AGAIN!
THE COAST IS A LONG WAY OFF, GREGOS. THE MEN ARE IN NO SHAPE FOR A LONG MARCH . . .

BUT THE GIANT GREEK LEADER DROVE HIS MEN ON RELENTLESSLY . . .
FASTER—FASTER! WE MUST BREAK OUT OF THE TRAP THE NAZIS HAVE SET FOR US—OR ALL IS LOST!


WITH THE LASH OF HIS TONGUE, GREGOS KEPT THEM MOVING WHEN BODIES AND MINDS WERE PAST ENDEAVOUR.
YOU MUST DRAG YOUR FEET OVER THE ROCKS EVEN THOUGH THEY BLEED! IF ANY ONE OF YOU FALLS OUT HE WILL BE LEFT! MARCH!
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO GREGOS? HE IS RUTHLESS, CRUEL EVEN . . .

SAMOS, GIORGIOS' BROTHER, WAS THE FIRST TO BREAK . . .
I CANNOT GO ON! I CANNOT MARCH ANY MORE!
YOU'LL MARCH IF I HAVE TO WHIP YOU INTO MOVING! STAND UP, SAMOS, AND BE A MAN! I AM IN COMMAND HERE AND YOU WILL DO AS I SAY—MARCH!
NOW I KNOW WHERE I'VE HEARD THAT TONE OF VOICE BEFORE—SERGEANT ROYAL!

AS HE TOILED AND SWEATED, ROBIN FORD REALISED, AT LAST, SOMETHING OF THE TRUTH OF COMMAND.
GREGOS IS DRIVING HIS MEN JUST LIKE SERGEANT ROYAL DID. WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH YOU HAVE TO DRIVE THEM! AND I KILLED SERGEANT ROYAL...
AT LAST, THAT TERRIBLE ORDEAL ENDED. THE GUERILLAS REACHED THE COAST — AND OTHER RESISTANCE FIGHTERS.
AH! HERE ARE OUR FRIENDS! NOW WE CAN REST FOR A WHILE.
IT IS ONLY THANKS TO YOU, GREGOS, THAT WE ESCAPED!
YES, ROBIN MY SON, I FORCED MY MEN TO MARCH. A LEADER MUST DRIVE SOME MEN AND OTHERS HE CAN LEAD. I KNOW YOU UNDERSTAND THAT...
YES, I SEE THAT NOW...

AS THE GREEKS INTERMINGLED, ALL THE SHAME AND GUILT HE FELT ABOUT SERGEANT ROYAL'S DEATH FLOODED BACK TO ROBIN FORD.
SERGEANT ROYAL WAS A DRIVER—AND THE MAN HE HAD TO DRIVE THE MOST WAS ME!
YOU HAVE ARRIVED AT AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT. TONIGHT, BRITISH COMMANDOS ARE LANDING. TOGETHER WE ATTACK THE AERODROME NEARBY.
WE WILL FIGHT BY YOUR SIDE AND BY THE SIDE OF THE BRITISH COMMANDOS!

THAT NIGHT, AS THE LOCAL GREEKS MET THE COMMANDOS AND GUIDED THEM ASHORE, GREGOS AND HIS MEN LAY SILENTLY OVERLOOKING THE GERMAN AERODROME.
THE NAZIS GUARD THEIR AERODROME WELL. BUT WITH OUR FRIENDS AND THE BRITISH WE SHALL SMASH ALL THE PLANES!

BUT AS THE GUERILLAS STORMED IN TO THE ATTACK, HE SLIPPED AND FOUND HIMSELF LEFT HELPLESSLY BEHIND.
OUF! MY ANKLE! IT'S NO GOOD— I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH THEM!

GRITTING HIS TEETH AGAINST THE PAIN, HE HOBBLED AFTER HIS GREEK COMRADES . . .
THIS IS WELL-NIGH HOPELESS — I'LL NEVER CATCH THEM NOW!

A SUDDEN STRIDENT CHALLENGE RANG OUT IN THE DARKNESS AND HE DROPPED INSTINCTIVELY TO COVER.
HALTEN! HALT OR I FIRE!
NOW I'M DONE FOR!

NEXT MOMENT, A SUB MACHINE GUN STAMMERED FRENZIEDLY— AND ROBIN FORD ALMOST UTTERED A CRY OF RELIEF AS HE REALISED THAT THE GERMAN WAS THE TARGET.
AAARGH!

QUICKLY AND SILENTLY, AS GREGOS HAD TAUGHT HIM, FORD SLID DOWN BESIDE THE DARK FIGURE SHOOTING AT OTHER GERMANS WHO WERE CONVERGING ON THE SCENE.
GOOD WORK, PAL! MIND IF I GIVE YOU A HAND?
YOU'RE WELCOME. I GOT CUT OFF FROM THE MAIN BODY OF COMMANDOS, MAYBE YOU CAN GUIDE ME BACK TO THEM. YOU GREEKS ARE DOING A GREAT JOB TONIGHT...

ROBIN FORD TURNED AND STARED AT THE OTHER IN AMAZEMENT.
SERGEANT ROYAL! BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD! I THOUGHT I'D KILLED YOU!
FORD! IT'D TAKE MORE THAN A YELLOW RAT LIKE YOU TO KILL ME! NO, A BRANCH BROKE MY FALL — NO THANKS TO YOU! I'LL SEE YOU COURT-MARTIALLED YET, FORD!

THE GERMAN ATTACK WAS INCREASING IN INTENSITY . . .
HERE THEY COME AGAIN! I'VE WORK TO DO, FORD!
WHAT D'YOU THINK I'VE BEEN DOING SINCE YOU SCUTTLED OUT OF GREECE? I'VE BEEN FIGHTING THE NAZIS! ME AND MY GREEK PALS HAVE BEEN HITTING THE JERRIES WHERE IT HURTS!

A SUDDEN FROSTY GLEAM SHONE IN SERGEANT ROYAL'S EYES . . .
WONDERS WILL NEVER CEASE! AT LAST YOU'RE SPEAKING LIKE A MAN, FORD. I BELIEVE YOU *HAVE* BEEN FIGHTING JERRY!
WE'LL HOLD THIS ATTACK OFF AND THEN WE'LL MAKE A BREAK FOR IT. I'VE GOT TO GET YOU BACK TO YOUR MATES . . .

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU RISK IF YOU GO BACK TO THE BRITISH ARMY, FORD? AND YET YOU SAY YOU'LL GUIDE ME BACK. MAYBE AT LONG LAST SOMEONE'S MADE A MAN OF YOU. YOU ALWAYS HAD TO BE DRIVEN BEFORE...

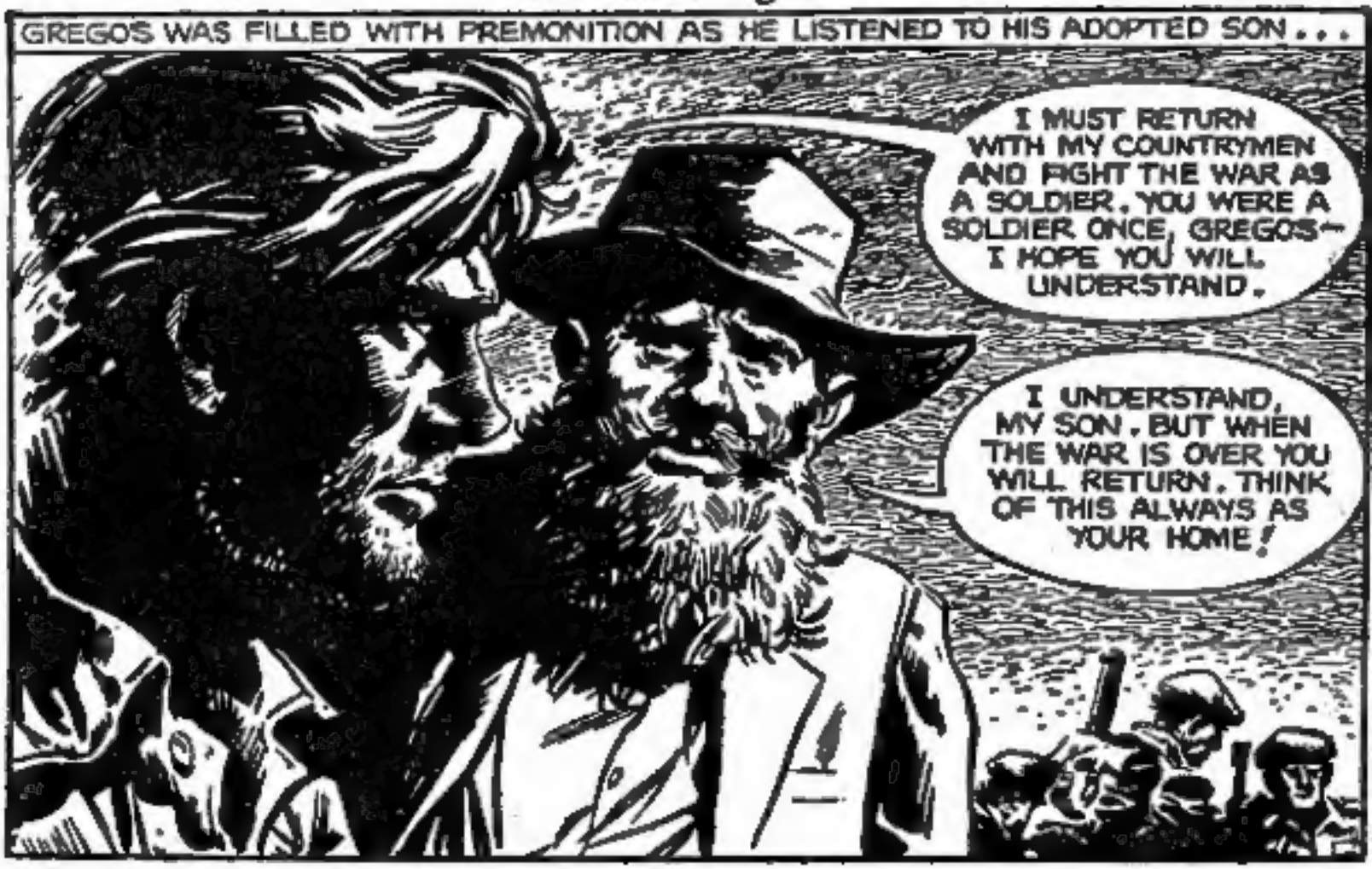
BRIEFLY, THEY GLARED AT EACH OTHER...
I'LL GUIDE YOU BACK IF I CAN FIND THE WAY IN THE DARK. ONCE I WAS A MAN WHO HAD TO BE DRIVEN, ROYAL — BUT NOT ANY MORE.
SOME MEN CAN LEAD, FORD, AND OTHERS HAVE TO BE LED — *OR DRIVEN!* THAT'S WHY THE ARMY HAS N.C.O.s...

THE GERMAN ATTACK CRUMBLED UNDER THE PUNISHING AUTOMATIC FIRE AND THE NAZIS RETREATED. BUT ONE LAST SHOT SPANGED VICIOUSLY FROM THE DARKNESS...
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT NOW, FORD. I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE GORGE — *AAAGH!*
SAR'NT — ROYAL! *NO!*

DESPITE HIS PAIN, THE SERGEANT MANAGED A FAINT TWISTED GRIN.
SORRY, SON— YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN FROM HERE ON.
SERGEANT, I'M SORRY IT HAD TO END LIKE THIS!

SOMBRELY, ROBIN FORD LOOKED DOWN AT THE MAN HE HAD ONCE HATED...
I UNDERSTOOD YOU TOO LATE, SERGEANT ROYAL. MAYBE THERE IS A WAY I CAN MAKE AMENDS FOR THE PAST...

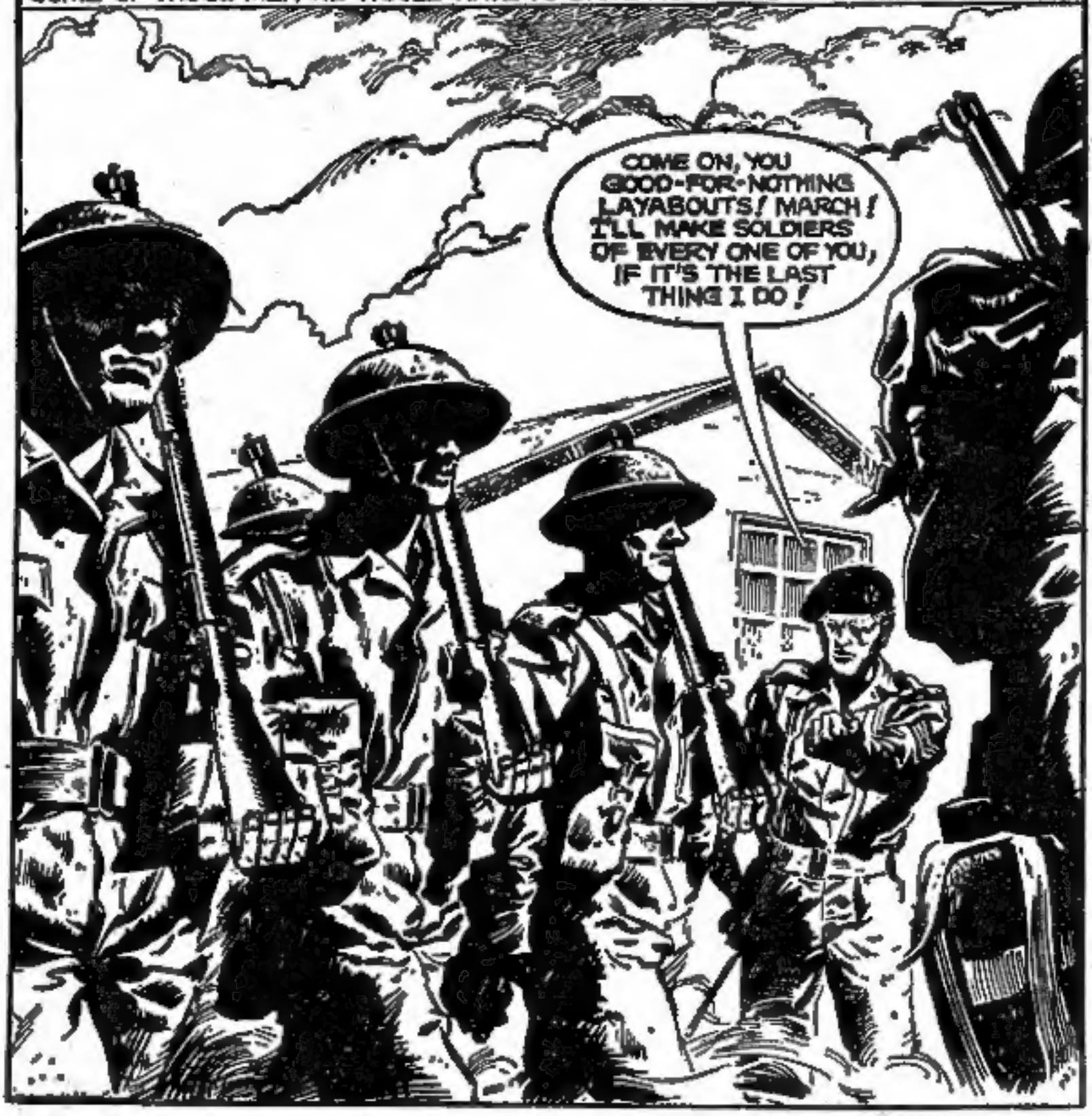
LATER, ROBIN FOUND HIS WAY TO THE BEACH, WHERE THE COMMANDOS WERE EMBARKING.
ROBIN! MY SON—WE HAD THOUGHT YOU KILLED!
JUST THE REVERSE, GREGOS— YOU COULD SAY I'VE BEEN BORN AGAIN! I'VE FOUND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT MYSELF— AND I KNOW NOW WHAT I MUST DO!


GREGOS WAS FILLED WITH PREMONITION AS HE LISTENED TO HIS ADOPTED SON . . .
I MUST RETURN WITH MY COUNTRYMEN AND FIGHT THE WAR AS A SOLDIER. YOU WERE A SOLDIER ONCE, GREGOS— I HOPE YOU WILL UNDERSTAND.
I UNDERSTAND, MY SON. BUT WHEN THE WAR IS OVER YOU WILL RETURN. THINK OF THIS ALWAYS AS YOUR HOME!

AND SO THE BOATS SAILED AWAY FROM OCCUPIED GREECE AND WITH THEM WENT ROBIN FORD. GREGOS STOOD FOR A LONG WHILE ON THE SHORE, AN ACHE IN HIS HEART.
MAY THE GODS WATCH OVER MY SON. ONCE HE WAS WEAK, BUT NOW HE IS STRONG. I PRAY THAT ONE DAY HE WILL RETURN!

To Strike Again

BUT BEFORE THAT DAY COULD DAWN, THERE WOULD BE MORE YEARS OF WAR... AND SERGEANT ROBIN FORD WOULD FIND MANY MEN TO TRAIN AND COMMAND. SOME OF THOSE MEN HE WOULD HAVE TO DRIVE AS HE HAD ONCE BEEN DRIVEN.



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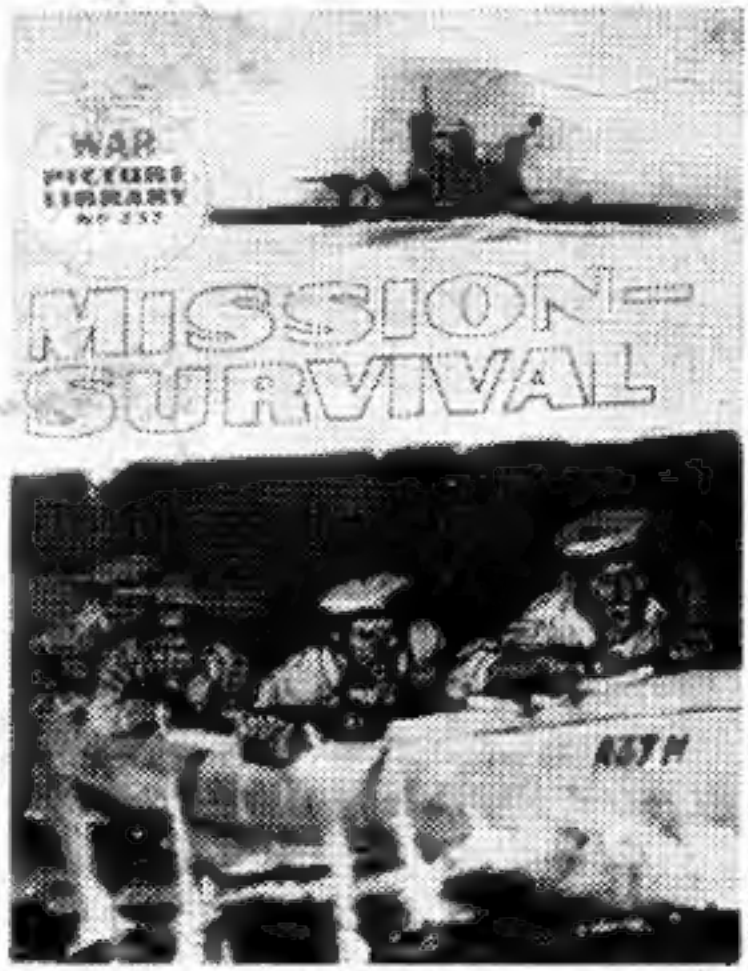

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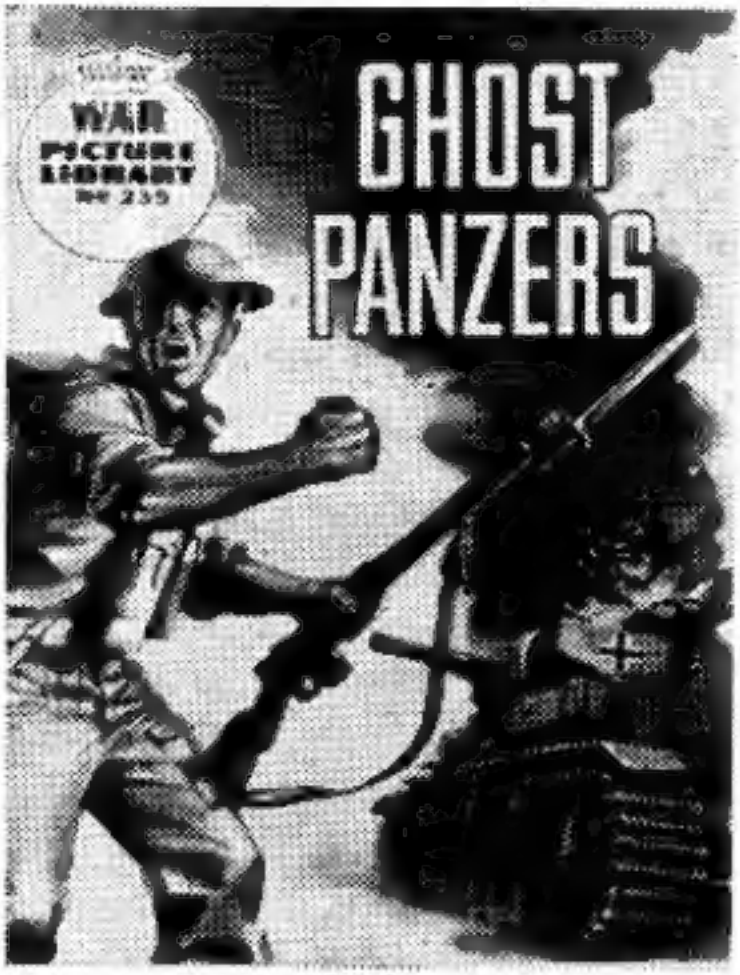

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